



Florida House of Representatives

Representative Martin David Kiar

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Gary VanLandingham, Ph.D.
Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
111 West Madison, Room 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

December 16, 2008

Dear Dr. VanLandingham,

I write today asking that the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability conduct a more thorough review of the Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship program to assess its impacts on the state public education system as well as on the state budget.

The OPPAGA report No. 08-68 only addresses half of the question the Legislature wanted answered when it passed Chapter 2008-241 Laws of Florida. By directing OPPAGA to review "the advisability and net state fiscal impact of" increasing the voucher's cap and authorizing the use of insurance premium taxes to increase funding for the program, crucial components of the program's impacts were ignored, including the program's effect on the public school system, individual public schools, and students.

Specifically, I believe the law directs OPPAGA to consider:

- What is the fiscal impact on public schools that lose students who accept the corporate tax voucher yet do not lose enough students to lay off teachers and close classrooms?
- Should taxpayers' money be used to pay for children's private school education when there is no requirement that the private schools meet the same standard as public school students must achieve on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test?
- How does giving taxpayers' money to private schools square with the Florida Constitution's mandate for the Legislature to make "adequate provision... for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education..." particularly when accountability measures do not apply to private schools?

- What would be the fiscal impact on the state and public school system if the Legislature only allowed students who are now eligible for corporate tax vouchers to exercise the public school choice aspect of the program and offer them transportation to the public school they choose to attend?

These questions are crucial for the Legislature to have a true assessment of the impacts of the corporate tax voucher on the entire state, not just a portion of it. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rep. Marty Kiar, District 97

CC: Speaker Ray Sansom
Members of the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee